

Reading Report

***Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* Dr. Wanda Walborn**

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Professor: Dr. Ronald Walborn and Guest: Dr. Wanda Walborn

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Dr. Walbourn's book *Spiritual Journey* poses and answers the question, "Can I really get close to God?". While a relatively short book, it is incredibly rich in content. Dr. Walbourn explains what a spiritual journey is and why it matters, confirms the need for all people to belong and feel accepted, addresses our brokenness, reminds us of God's desire to have intimacy with us, considers how character takes time to develop and shepherds the reader through how to hear God's voice. After introducing each step, she acknowledges obstacles and teaches practices to help the reader overcome these obstacles. She includes pauses for reflection, mirror moments, as well as excellent study questions to further engage the reader with the material

This book has already found application in my current ministry. A meeting today with two of my closest friends provided an opportunity to share what this book teaches on hearing God's voice. "The convicting voice of the Holy Spirit is specific, is restorative, leads to repentance, gives hope, and produces love and peace. God's voice provides solutions and freedom (130)". The eight different ways we receive Words of Knowledge

and Words of Wisdom and the Nine Scriptural Tests for Hearing God's Voice are particularly timely as we spent the morning preparing for our next Sunday evening gathering, which will focus on how God speaks.

This book is in alignment with my worldview. I would be hard-pressed to find any detail with which I disagree. There are chapters which surprised me due to my emotional response. I have had the benefit of learning from Dr. Walborn while participating in Empower. Many concepts in this book were part of my Empower experience and it is encouraging to recognize I have continued to grow. Spiritual growth is something that occurs over time and therefore it is easy to overlook the changes within us. Sanctification is truly making new people of us, in Imago Dei. "God loves us just as we are and our identity is established by security in this kind of love. Once the mask of the false self is removed, there is freedom to receive, acceptance, affection, and approval" (107). I was reminded of my old self as I read about the masks we wear, of how we can live so much for others' approval that we do not know ourselves, and of how we so fear rejection we embrace these false identities as our own. I am a different person now. I had almost forgotten how I used to think and live. I experienced grief for the woman I used to be who did not know who God really is and lived wearing a mask and pretending to be perfect and whole. This book is an excellent tool to help others learn to find their identity in who God says they are and therefore let go of the need for masks. It is only when we know who God truly is and can trust his character and love that we can first be our true selves and then from this place of acceptance, pursue the mission he has for us.

Dr. Walbourn is incredibly honest and transparent. She bravely models how we humble ourselves and trust God to use all we have been and are today in order to minister to others. She shares her struggles and her hard-won wisdom and thus invites others to lower their protective barriers and admit they are not O.K. and in desperate need of God. "God is the One who changes us; we simply say yes to His promptings and are empowered by His Spirit to be able to change (46)".

With integrity, I have read this book (circle one):

- Thoroughly and Entirely 100 %

Signed: Stefanie Hill

Bibliography

Walborn, Wanda. *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* Franklin, Tennessee: Carpenter's Son Publishing, 2020.